

1.24.03

**FY02 SPENDING MEASURE GOES TO CONFERENCE AS
SENATE PASSES OMNIBUS \$391 BILLION MEASURE THAT
INCLUDES A 2.9% ACROSS-THE BOARD CUT**

**NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN NEXT WEEK TO DETERMINE FINAL
SPENDING PACKAGE**

Last night the Senate passed a \$391 spending measure for the fiscal budget year that began in October 2002. As reported in recent Advocacy Alerts (1.21, 1.16), the measure includes an across-the-board cut of at least 2.9% in all domestic, non-defense, non-entitlement programs to offset added spending for high-priority programs while staying within the Administration's spending ceiling. (Due to late-passed additional spending amendments budget officials are still calculating the total cut percentage). The measure was inserted into a resolution (H J Res 2) already passed by the House and the bill will now go to "conference" where selected House and Senate members will negotiate a unified final spending bill.

**CONTACT YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND URGE THEM TO
OPPOSE ANY CONFERENCE REPORT THAT INCLUDES CUTS TO
OLDER AMERICAN ACT PROGRAMS AND
OTHER HUMAN SERVICES!**

House leadership, who will be among the conferees, has already indicated their unwillingness to accept a cut of that magnitude and budget officials are considering ways to reclassify some of the increases, which would reduce the overall percentage cut. **It is extremely important to contact your members because your calls will validate that constituents share their concerns.**

Once Conferees are named we will be targeting our message in their states. Look for another Advocacy Alert next week

FYI : Amendments that passed during the week's debate include one offered by Senators Reed (D-RI) and Collins (R-ME) to add \$300 million in previously unreleased emergency LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) to the \$1.7 billion FY03 proposed allocation. An amendment offered by Senator Bingaman (D-NM) extending the Medicare QI 1 (Qualified Individual 1) program due to expire on March 12 through the end of the fiscal year (September 30) also passed. The QI 1 program assists Medicare beneficiaries with incomes between 120-135% of the federal poverty level with their premium payments.